

currently guaranteed by the Constitution. So we need far more than what is being given to this bill, even through our discussion on the floor.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time. The Chair is pleased to note that under the south balcony we have a special guest with us, Stephanie Crandall Seng, a former Page for this body, and her husband, Chris Seng and their special guest, Mr. Siradou Bah from Guinea, West Africa. Would you folks please stand. Thank you, we're pleased to have you. The Chair recognizes Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I wanted to say a couple things on this issue, and I appreciated Senator Wehrbein's comments, because he said...stated some things in a way that imitate some of the feelings that I've been going through in my deliberation of the bill. I guess my comments are more for the judiciary, the judicial branch of our particular system. And I want them to make sure that they are very clear in what they are trying to do. And I say that because sometimes there are opportunities to make changes in an approach in order to achieve the long-term objective. And I believe the long-term objective is to relieve the Supreme Court of a very overburdened docket, still maintain an appellate system for the people of Nebraska, and also still try to maintain the important cases, whether they be for large individuals, important individuals, or unimportant individuals, the important cases to be heard in the best way possible by the Supreme Court. But I have some severe personal doubts that if the body keeps in the portions that take the rights out of the Constitution and put it into statute, and I have no illusions that that is exactly what this body will do if Senator Kristensen and others say that that is what they want done. I believe it will happen. My point is I would think it would be so easy to bring this whole issue down to its most common denominator when you go to the public and ask the public, do you want your rights taken out of the Constitution and put in a statute that could be changed at any time by any state Legislature when a new fad arises? And I bring to you the issue of Initiative 300. Initiative 300, Senator Baack, if I remember right, and others, came before and they said, listen, what we want to do is take that out of the Constitution and put it in the statute. And Nebraskans overwhelmingly, at that point, said, no, don't do that. If you put it in the statute, it makes it easier to take it away. And I put to you that when this